



MONTANA STATE HOSPITAL POLICY AND PROCEDURE

PATIENT SOCIO-SEXUAL BEHAVIOR

Effective Date: August 4, 2003

Policy #: TX-11

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- I. PURPOSE:** To provide appropriate guidelines and procedures for staff to follow when confronted with issues relating to the socio-sexual behavior of hospital patients.
- II. POLICY:** Montana State Hospital patients will be provided with education and/or counseling, when necessary, regarding sexual behavior, including sexually transmitted diseases. MSH patients will be protected, if at all possible, from sexual assault and sexual exploitation. Montana State Hospital strongly discourages patients from forming sexual relationships during the course of hospitalization and will take action to prevent inappropriate or exploitative sexual activity involving hospital patients.
- III. DEFINITIONS:** None
- IV. RESPONSIBILITIES:**
 - A. Responsibilities of ALL Staff**
 - 1. To understand and follow hospital policy.
 - 2. To ask for assistance from other appropriate supervisory or clinical staff members when faced with a difficult issue not clearly addressed by policy.
 - 3. To refrain from imposing one's personal social or sexual values on people with mental illness.
 - 4. To protect patients who may be sexually victimized by others.
 - 5. To respond appropriately to questions or concerns that patients may have regarding socio-sexual issues.
 - 6. To ensure that education, guidance or counseling on socio-sexual issues, including sexually transmitted diseases, is provided per treatment plan or as appropriate.
- V. PROCEDURE:**
 - A. Socio-Sexual Education and Counseling Services for Patients**
 - 1. The hospital will, as part of its comprehensive treatment program, offer patients an opportunity to participate in educational and therapeutic

programs that will provide them with appropriate information on socio-sexual issues (e.g. sexually transmitted diseases, birth control methods, social skills). This may be done in programs specifically designed for this purpose, or may be included in broader focused treatment programs such as social skills groups, psychotherapy groups, and health education classes.

2. As part of a patient's individual treatment program, patients may request or be prescribed counseling and therapy services for socio-sexual problems/needs from appropriately trained staff members.

B. Sexual Activity Between Patients

1. The hospital recognizes that sexual contact between consenting adults is a normal activity. However, sexual contact between patients on the hospital grounds or during hospital activities off of the grounds is discouraged for the following reasons:
 - a. In order to protect the health and safety of patients who might be exposed to sexually transmitted diseases;
 - b. In order to protect patients who may lack the cognitive capacity to consent to having sexual contact;
 - c. In order to protect patients who could be vulnerable to victimization or exploitation by others during a time when they are experiencing symptoms of mental illness so severe as to require hospitalization;
 - d. In order to protect patients who have difficulty controlling their sexual impulses where this is a focus of their treatment;
 - e. In order to protect the privacy rights of all patients; and
 - f. In order to maintain order and decorum in the hospital consistent with hospital and community expectations.
2. Staff members will take reasonable steps to prevent the opportunity for sexual contact between patients. This may include defining the campus boundaries where patients may use their campus pass and limiting campus pass for individuals who demonstrate poor impulse control or reckless behavior.
3. Touching of a sexual or romantic nature is prohibited on all units.

4. Patients who are found to be engaging in sexual contact with another patient will be evaluated to determine whether there is any predatory or exploitative behavior involved. They will also be reminded of the hospital's reasons for discouraging sexual contact between patients. Additionally, a clinical determination will be made as to whether the patient should receive counseling or be involved in educational programs that address this issue. Modifications to the patient's treatment plan may also be made as determined to be necessary by the treatment team.

C. Sexual Activity Between Patients and Their Spouses or Visitors

The hospital does not offer appropriate facilities for patients to have sexual contact with their spouses or with other visitors. Should patients desire intimacy for a visit, they may request permission for an off-grounds visit. In such a case, the hospital's policy on off-grounds visits will be followed.

D. Sexual Assaults by Patients

Refer to hospital policy "Allegation of Rape."

E. Inappropriate or Deviant Socio-Sexual Problems as a Treatment Issue

Patients exhibiting specific socio-sexual problems or behaviors such as sexual disorders, dysfunctions, "high-risk" behavior, and/or inappropriate or unlawful behavior will have the problem/behavior addressed on their individualized treatment plan.

F. Explicit Sexual Material

1. Explicit sexual material is defined as any materials, such as books, photographs, magazines, drawings or movies depicting nudity, or erotic behavior that is commonly interpreted to appeal to sexual interest.
2. Patients may possess sexually explicit material that *is not clinically contraindicated* or otherwise prohibited by law, if kept in a private location and if not shared with other patients or staff members.
3. Sexually explicit material may not be displayed on walls or in other areas where it may be readily observed. It is to be kept in books or folders or in personal drawers or on shelves so that respect for the feelings and values of others is maintained.
4. If sexually explicit material is found on display, staff are to ask the patient to remove it with instructions to keep it in private. If the owner of the

sexually explicit material is unknown, staff members may remove the material and dispose of it.

5. Individual patients may have specific problems or treatment needs in this area which should be addressed on their treatment plan.
6. Each unit may adopt specific rules regarding sexually explicit material in order to maintain an appropriate therapeutic milieu.

G. Distribution of Condoms

In order to reduce the risk of spreading sexually transmitted diseases and to help prevent unwanted pregnancies, patients may request a condom from a licensed nurse. Appropriate counseling will be provided to patients making such requests.

H. Prescription Birth Control Medications and Devices

Birth control medications and devices other than condoms may be prescribed for patients as indicated.

VI. **REFERENCES:** MSH Policy “Allegation of Rape”

VII. **COLLABORATED WITH:** Medical Director, Director of Nursing Services.

VIII. **RESCISSIONS:** #TX-11, *Patient Socio-Sexual Behavior* dated May 20, 2002; Policy # TX-11, *Patient Socio-Sexual Behavior* dated March 1, 2000; H.O.P.P. #13-03 S. 090391, *Patient Socio-Sexual Behavior* dated September 3, 1991.

IX. **DISTRIBUTION:** All hospital policy manuals

X. **REVIEW AND REISSUE DATE:** August 2006

XI. **FOLLOW-UP RESPONSIBILITY:** Hospital Administrator

XII. **ATTACHMENTS:** None

_____/____/____
Ed Amberg
Hospital Administrator

Date

_____/____/____
Thomas Gray, MD
Medical Director

Date